(c) who is responsible for providing misleading information under RTI Act and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) An application seeking information under Right to Information (RTI) Act regarding foreign tours of the Central Ministers during the tenure of United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government was made by the applicant to the Ministry of Home Affair, who under Section 6(3) of the RTI Act, transferred the application, to all the Ministries/Departments for sending the information pertaining to them directly to the applicant.

As per RTI Act, reply to the RTI application is given by the concerned Public Information Officer of the respective Departments. The Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport & Highways comprises of two Departments namely Department of Road Transport & Highways and Department of Shipping having their own designated Public Information Officers. The reply sent in respect of the RTI application was given by the Department of Road Transport & Highways on the basis of the information available with that Department at that point of time. The information relating to visit to the two countries i.e. Egypt and Panama in the year 2004 related to the Department of Shipping. The purpose of this visit was not known to the Department of Road Transport & Highways as it was not sponsored by them.

Subsequently the position was clarified taking into account the information available with the Department of Shipping with a view to explain the position with reference to a report which appeared in a newspaper. Additional information was also furnished to the applicant.

(c) The information was supplied to the applicant by Public Information Officer (PIO) of Department of Road Transport & Highways. Action is being initiated against him for providing incomplete information.

Difference in socio-economic standards among States

†*378. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the gap in socio-economic standards of existing 28 States of the country has become a matter of concern;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) whether Government has identified the backward and developed States separately and if so, the names thereof; and

(d) whether any provision has been made to implement Special Development Scheme in backward as well as most backward States during the Eleventh Five Year Plan period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In order to bridge the gap in socio-economic standards, the Government is focusing on Flagship Schemes in critical sectors, such as National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP), National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Scheme, Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), Bharat Nirman (Irrigation, drinking water, roads, rural electrification, housing, and telephone connectivity) and Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC). The major programme for addressing the problem of regional imbalances is the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) which was launched in 2006-07 to catalyze development in backward areas through two components, namely, (i) Districts Component covering 250 backward districts and (ii) Special Plans for Bihar and the Kalahandi-Bolangir-Koraput (KBK) districts of Orissa.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) the Backward Regions Grant Fund launched in 2006-07 will continue during the Eleventh Plan. During 2007-08 and 2008-09, a provision of Rs. 5,800 crore has been made annually.

Monthly remuneration for hockey players

*379. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Hockey players selected in the National Team are entitled to monthly remuneration;

(b) if so, the details of amount paid to each player, separately for men and women players;

(c) whether Government is aware of reports of delays in payment to these players;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken to avoid such delays?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (DR. M.S. GILL): (a) No, Sir. No monthly remuneration is paid by the Government to any player, including hockey players.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

Shortage of housing units

*380. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that there is a shortage of three crore housing units in the country;

(b) if so, the number of units Government proposes to build during the Eleventh Five Year Plan period particularly for the people of low and medium income group in the country;

(c) whether Government would provide special incentives to private sector for this purpose; and

(d) the number of Government sponsored projects going on with the details of projects, city-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION (KUMARI SELJA): (a) to (d) The Technical Group on Estimation of Housing Shortage constituted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation has estimated the total housing shortage in the country to be 24.7 million at the beginning of the Eleventh Five Year Plan.